



PHOTO BY JIM ROBERTSON

Florence Police Officer Adam Argullin

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Having played drums since he was 5 and recording his first album at the age of 11, Officer Adam Argullin always dreamed he'd find a way to combine music and law enforcement — and his 'Stay Tuned' program now is rocking communities across the commonwealth. Argullin's 13-year law enforcement career has been varied and unique, to say the least. Beginning his career with the Kentucky Horse Park Police Department shortly after graduating from Eastern Kentucky University, Argullin served there two years before being persuaded by friends to apply at Florence Police Department. Once at Florence, Argullin immersed himself in narcotics investigation, working undercover with the FBI and serving with the Safe Streets Task Force for three years. He also began taking instructor certification courses. Earning certification as a defensive tactics, DARE, drug recognition expert and general KLEC instructor, opened the door to one of his true passions — educating. Now as an officer in the Community Resource Unit, Argullin is combining his fervor for law enforcement and education and his first love of music into a dynamic presentation package for schools and community groups.

My first real job was as an actor at an amusement park. I was a cowboy/gunfighter, so I had to do research on historic law men. I found the office of the sheriff and the office of the marshal fascinating. I always thought in the back of my mind it would be an interesting career path. But it wasn't until the summer of my junior year in college that I made the switch from music to criminal justice.

I had this crazy idea when I switched my major that I might find a way to combine the two, one day. Music is all I'd known since I was 5 years old. In my junior year, at the age of 19, I'd been drumming for 14 years, I didn't want to give it up. But I put it on the back burner. Fast forward 15 years, I've finally come to the point where I can combine policing and my love and life for music.

I'm assigned to our Community Resource Unit. I teach DARE, Citizens' Police Academy and our teen academy, and speak at any kind of public speaking or training event. Given my drug recognition expert training, I commonly participate in heroin town hall meetings. I'll speak about how to tell

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if a friend, family member or loved one is under the influence of heroin — learn to catch those tell-tale signs before it spirals out of control.

This past summer I spoke at a family resources conference and a woman called me and said, 'You mentioned to me that you also play drums; will you write us a school assembly program, where you teach what you talked about at the conference and play drums?' That was the kick in the pants I needed. I sat down to write the program and, literally, didn't leave my apartment for a week. I did my first school assembly at Central Hardin High School, which became my 'Stay Tuned' program.

'Stay Tuned,' is a drum-infused, anti-drug, motivational experience. I combine the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol, but I infuse it with music to keep them entertained, and motivation because I tell them how I never went down the wrong path and stayed focused. Stay Tuned is a double entendre. Tuning of the drums is one part, but staying tuned into what's important and what you're focused on is the other. Whatever this idea is you want to do one day, no matter how crazy it is, that's what you should be doing.

In DARE, I tell them my generic bio — 'I've done this assignment and that assignment, but that's not who I am. It's what I do and have done, but it's not who I am as a person. Everyone is something other than what they do for 40 hours a week.' Even at the fifth-grade level, when they see me out at McDonald's I am Adam — I have them call me Officer Adam, not my last name, so it sort of bridges that personal barrier most officers have with people.

Throughout the DARE curriculum I tell them bits and pieces of personal information about me. They'll start asking questions. In most DARE classes, before I started doing this, they asked questions like, 'Have you ever shot anybody, ever been shot at, have you arrested my ...?' Since I started this

approach, they have started asking questions about me.

Then I surprise them at graduation dressed like them, in a DARE T-shirt and jeans. Graduation will go smooth until I pull back the stage curtain and play drums for them. Then it all comes home because they think, he told me all this, but now I get it.

Florence Police Department allows me to drum for DARE graduations because whereas most agencies' DARE funding is drying up — we celebrate ours a little more. I love when people say, 'DARE doesn't work.' Wrong — you just didn't have the right person in the classroom. If you make that personal connection with those students, it works — absolutely.

Some people think I've had a joke of a career because I don't work the road, but I think I've had a very blessed and charmed career. All the training I've received builds upon the next thing, and I'm able to use all of that now. I'm able to use it for the people who will move into the positions that will take care of us one day.

I think every single person has their own niche, and mine is educating. That is one thing you can do that will continue on. Someone will learn something from it. I fully believe my station in life is to educate in some way. The fact that I get to educate while still being a police officer is even better.

I wish more people could draw their personal side into their professional side. There is life other than behind the badge, and I don't think people should wait until retirement to figure that out. I've had too many friends that have retired and been like, now what? Officers should think that through and continue with whatever it is they enjoy. It helps for after policing, but it also helps during policing to prevent burnout. 🎵

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